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METRO LETTER CARRIER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF LONE STAR BRANCH #132, NALC

LINDA BOROUGHS, EDITOR

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

KIMETRA LEWIS



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

Greetings, brothers and sisters! Here recently we have had an opportunity to see true TEAMWORK in action. TEAMWORK takes the collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in the most effective and efficient way. Through the efforts of TEAMWORK, we recently have been victorious with many disputes with the Postal Service throughout the branch.

I would like to thank the officers of Branch 132, the stewards, the Formal A representatives, the Step B members, and our representatives from the National Business Agent Office for jobs well done!

As stated above, recently we began to reap the benefits of union teamwork. Supervisors and other craft employees performing letter carrier's work: settled! Managers and supervisors creating hostile environments: settled! Carriers removed from their hold-down assignments: settled! Consolidated Casing: settled! Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation, AKA "Grab & Go": settled! Supervisors/Managers falsifying clock rings: settled! Unjustified discipline: settled!

Does this mean we will never have problems again? No. However, what it does mean is that it is important for us to remember that even as we celebrate our victories, we must continue to fight together as a team!

As union members, we should operate under one common cause: UNITY! Together we should unite to protect the rights granted to us through our national contract. Those brothers and

sisters before us paved the way with their blood, sweat, and tears, so that we can have equal pay, equal rights, and the right to work in a safe environment. Our national officers are currently working hard to secure a new contract that will provide a promise for our future careers. It is our responsibility to maintain what has and what will be achieved.

While we may not always agree with one another, let us recognize that it is going to take TEAMWORK to succeed. This is not a time for division. We are living in dire times, in a time of uncertainty. The coronavirus is making headlines daily. Its long-term effect upon the Postal Service is unknown. That gives us more of a reason why we should rally together as one!

I know in the past I have written articles encouraging unity. I will continue to do so until it is embedded in the hearts and minds of each brother and sister that we should help one another when we see a brother or sister struggling. It doesn't matter if it is a struggle to get to work as scheduled or a struggle to get the job done. When you see a brother or sister in need, help them. Do not sit back and watch them destroy their careers and lose their livelihood. Intervene if you see a situation getting out of hand, then help your coworker to understand that we are bound by the rules to follow the instructions of management and grieve later.

Be a vessel to help your fellow coworker. Do not cause harm to him or her by joining forces with management. Not one member of management will go up against another member of management to aid a letter carrier. So why should we assist them with causing harm to a fellow coworker? Let us unite to protect one another. There is an old saying that carries a strong message: "Together we stand, divide we fall!"

Over my career with the Postal Service, I have fought many fights alone. While I may have been successful, the impact on the mindset of the Postal Service would have been greater if others had united with me in those fights. I am petitioning you to be there for one another. This is your chance to make this United States Postal Service a better workplace for all. See you soon on ZOOM!

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Stewards meet 7:00 PM the first Thursday of each month in the Branch Office.

Executive Board meets 7:00 PM last Monday of each month.

AFL-CIO Council meets third Thursday of each month.

Branch meeting 7:30 PM first Monday of each month unless deferred by membership vote.

Opinions expressed in this paper are those of the writers, and do not express the opinions of the editor or the Union. All articles for publication must be signed and received by the Editor no later than the 1st of each month. If you wish to run your personal or business ad, rates are available on request and must be received by the 10th of each month to be inserted in the next month's issue. The editor's email address is LABORoughs@gmail.com



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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sid Simmons

As we all know, letter carriers are federal employees, which means we are held to a higher standard than many other professions. There are certain rules that uniquely apply to us when we are off the job. One example is that we are not allowed to wear our uniforms when off duty. Also we should never bring negative attention to the postal service when we interact with the public, whether we are on the clock or off the clock. In other words, no letter carrier should be the cause of a headline in the newspaper that reads, "Letter carrier John Doe was arrested at Walmart after a physical altercation." Such conduct would be considered a violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct, and in a worst case scenario, this conduct could lead to termination from the USPS.

As federal employees, there are also rules that pertain to us on the clock. Everyone talks about the two that are most obvious: It is against the law to throw away mail, and it is against the law to steal mail. As a matter of fact, these two examples could very likely result in you being indicted and prosecuted by the state attorney general. However, there are lesser violations that could cost you your job.

Recently, I represented a letter carrier who was caught on video delaying first class mail at an apartment complex. The letter carrier decided not to deliver a handful of DPS, so they placed the DPS in the outgoing mail box, with the intention of delivering it the next day. The letter carrier also threw the circulars for vacant apartments into a trash can located by the apartment boxes, instead of bringing them back to the post office to put them in the UBBM. And lastly, the letter carrier threw away all of the undeliverable mail which the customers had placed on top of the apartment boxes. As you might expect, the letter carrier was put off the clock pending a possible removal.

Fortunately for this letter carrier, the postmaster agreed to return them to duty with a Last Chance Agreement. But now that carrier's job will be hanging by a thread until the Last Chance Agreement expires, which will take two years. This story should be a lesson to all of us: It is important to always protect the sanctity of the mail. The mail does not belong to us. We are here to deliver it, not to delay it, and if we can't deliver it, then it has to come back to the post office and be processed properly. Don't take shortcuts, or you may find yourself off the clock, wondering why you tried to save five minutes by doing something stupid.

TEXAS STATE ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS DISTRICT 2 REPORT - 3RD QUARTER

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters of District 2!

As I write this article, it is very difficult for me to not mention the effects that the COVID-19 virus is still having on our nation. The COVID-19 virus has changed the way that we think, live, work, and educate our children. It is very important that safety precautions are adhered to at all times. Because of COVID-19, union branches have been closed to in-person meetings. Therefore, all legislative visits have been canceled.

I appreciate all of the Zoom Meetings with Brent Fjerestad, our national Legislative and Political Officer; Javier Bernal, our National Business Agent; and Javier's staff. Information was given on everything from visits by President Fred Rolando to the hottest issues related to legislation. In August, I was able to attend the Denton Branch 1367 meeting. All social distancing guidelines were followed and masks were worn by everyone.

Marvin Ruyle, Letter Carrier Congressional Liaison for District 26, invited me to attend in order to have legislative training. I discussed all of the legislation concerning the Postal Service. Members were introduced to the NALC App and were instructed on how to use the app to research legislative issues and send out emails.

In conjunction with the upcoming election, Vice President Everett Wylie and I were invited to a Zoom Meeting with the Central Texas Labor Council on Labor Day, September 7, 2020. One of the guests was MJ Hegar, a candidate for the United States Senate. Candidate Hegar is running against Senator John Cornyn who is not a friend of labor. This race and election are very important. This November election could be the election of the century. We need to make sure everyone that is eligible to VOTE does so. The election is on November 3, 2020, and early voting is from October 13 to October 30.

Be sure to read all of the instructions on the ballot. Straight-ticket voting will not be permitted in 2020, so keep voting until you get to the end of the ballot. Get familiar with all of your local and national candidates, and vote for the ones that have your best interests at heart. Keep in mind that the name of the party will be next to each candidate's name. Take the time to read each name, and vote your preference.

Continue to work safe, keep your loved ones safe, and pray for our nation.

Rita Wilder

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LAST PUNCH BUNCH



BOB KENDALL
34 YEARS • DALLAS - RICHLAND

Bob almost quit a few months after he started, but another carrier talked him into staying, and now he is retiring with 34 years. He worked at Richland Station for his entire career, except for 5 months after he went regular, when he was transferred to Farmers Branch. He bid back to Richland as soon as he could, and wound up retiring from a walking residential route, where the neighborhood was safe and peaceful. His Last Punch photo was actually taken when he punched out on his very last day, August 15, when the high was 102. Now that he is out of the heat, he plans to build a house in Crandall and enjoy the cool country weather. He advises the new carriers to have a thick skin and patience.



JAMES SCHOFIELD
24 YEARS • DALLAS - HIGHLAND HILLS

James started carrying mail the day after Thanksgiving at Highland Hills. He started as a casual, and also carried as a TE, PTF, and RLC, but he stayed at Highland Hills because it was close to home. During his career, he was shot on two separate occasions with BB guns - neither stopped him from finishing the route, although one did require surgery a year later. He didn't want to retire, but the years of working in the sun caused skin cancer which required him to stop carrying mail. He tells the new carriers to keep a good attitude and just take it one day at a time.

No Social Security Changes

President Donald Trump has allowed companies to cease withholding Social Security amounts. The USPS is NOT participating in this change. Carriers will continue to see Social Security payments withheld from their checks and will accrue Social Security benefits normally.

COVID-19 Changes

COVID-19 has changed a lot of things around the post office. Here are some changes to be aware of:

- Carriers can carry over 520 hours of annual leave this year. Normally, carriers can only carry over 440 hours. This change is only for 2020 and does not affect any other rules for annual leave. (While it has not been confirmed, rumors say that our own Rachel Anderson helped get this resolution passed.)
- Up to 80 hours of sick leave for dependent care can be used to care for a child due to closures of daycare or schools.
- Caring for a child due to closures of daycare or schools can be covered under FMLA.
- Carriers may use up to 80 hours of paid leave for COVID-19 related absences, including quarantines, infections, and caring for children. These 80 hours of paid leave can only be used once, and may not be split among multiple absences.

This is just a general overview of the changes. There are a lot of rules and regulations for each of these benefits - too many to cover here. Talk to your steward or to the union hall if you have questions about these, or go to NALC.org for more information.



JANINE SINGLETON

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT JULY 2020

National Dues	\$67,034.95
OWCP Dues	110.12
Misc.	330.72
Retiree Dues	
MBA Rebate	0.00
TSALC Rebate	0.00
HB Rebate	0.00
Deposit Dividends	2.44
TOTAL \$	\$67,478.23

AUGUST 2020

National Dues	\$99,068.77
OWCP Dues	395.92
Misc.	1,482.98
Retiree Dues	
MBA Rebate	0.00
TSALC Rebate	0.00
HB Rebate	0.00
Deposit Dividends	2.65
TOTAL \$	\$100,950.32

SICK & WELFARE REPORT

Addison – Bernard Bean’s wife passed away; Jesse Garcia’s sister passed away; Mikki Townsend is out ill.

Kaufman – Monica Addison.

Lancaster – Tarik Combs had surgery.

Lewisville – Russell Jones retired with 22 years.

Northwest (Longview) – Scott Eades.

Robert E. Price – Leonard Campbell’s wife passed away; Teresa German’s father passed away.

Seagoville – Rickie Chandler.

The Colony – Gwendolyn McClendon.

Retirees – Creola Gray’s brother passed away; Dwight Rogers passed away; Mark Moore’s mother passed away.

Auxiliary #28 – Wauldine Felder passed away.

TREASURER REPORT

General Fund	\$449,654.62
Regular Shares	25.00
Money Market	210,856.41
Stewards Fund	129,622.36
Convention Fund	0.00
CPA/Legal Fund	3,500.00
Building Fund	6,480.00
Education Fund	16,982.02
Money Market	54,272.03
MDA Fund	1,824.64
CD 18 Month	105,921.81
CD 18 Month	102,652.77
CD 12 Month	102,266.54
TOTAL \$	\$973,201.79

CUSTOMER CONNECT SUCCESS

Kathy Brown - Dallas - Northwest - She saw a FedEx trailer at a business on her route, so she called the Customer Connect representative to submit her lead. She wound up getting the USPS over one million dollars in revenue, and she got an honorary visit from NALC NBA Javier Bernal and District Manager Scott Hooper!

Deronda Jones - Dallas - Lake Highlands - She told her supervisor that an embroidery business needed some assistance with their packages. She was very pleased to bring the USPS \$89,871 of revenue from that business. Deronda continues to give her customers the same service that she would want to receive.

Lula Green - Dallas - Lake Highlands - Lula was picking up shipments twice a day and taking mailing bags to a business that had moved onto her route, when she decided that the USPS could get even more business from them. Lula was a pro at submitting leads - this was at least her sixth lead submitted - and this one resulted in over \$228,000 in revenue for the USPS.

Twasky Smith - Dallas - Oak Lawn - Twasky noticed that a business on his route, BuDhaGirl, was mailing packages with another company. He talked to the owner, and convinced the owner to give the post office a try. He got the name of the Customer Connect representative from Branch President Lewis, and passed that information on to his station manager. His efforts got the post office \$14,500 in new revenue.



KATHY BROWN



DERONDA JONES



LULA GREEN



TWASKY SMITH

ABUSIVE SUPERVISOR INCIDENT WORKSHEET

We all know that the atmosphere at the Post Office can be, well, challenging. The NALC and Branch 132 want to know about incidents where your supervisor is abusive. This newsletter contains an Abusive Supervisor Incident Worksheet. If you see a supervisor misbehaving, use the worksheet! Fill it out and give it to your steward or send it to the union hall.

Some actions that should be reported include yelling, cursing, and belittling carriers. The branch has been winning grievances on these issues, and we want to win more of them, but we need statements from carriers to do that. And by filing grievances and winning them, we can put management on notice that they need to act professionally and maturely when they are interacting with carriers.

There are several rules in different postal handbooks that govern behavior on the workroom floor. The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) states in Section 673.61:

All employees are expected to treat coworkers with dignity and respect.

This means everyone - carriers and management are all employees, and we are all coworkers. The ELM also states in Section 665.24: *The Postal Service is committed to the principle that all employees have a basic right to a safe and humane working environment. In order to ensure this right, it is the unequivocal policy of the Postal Service that there must be no tolerance of violence or threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service. Similarly, there must be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone at any level. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the Postal Service.*

The M-39 is a postal handbook that instructs carrier supervisors on how to manage their employees. It also has rules that protect carriers from abusive treatment in Sections 115.2-115.4:

Managers can accomplish their mission only through the effective use of people. How successful a manager is in working with people will, to a great measure, determine whether or not the goals of the Postal Service are attained. Getting the job done through people is not an easy task, and certain basic things are required, such as:

- a. Let the employee know what is expected of him or her.*
- b. Know fully if the employee is not attaining expectations; don't guess – make certain with documented evidence.*
- c. Let the employee explain his or her problem – listen! If given a chance, the employee will tell you the problem. Draw it out from the employee if needed, but get the whole story.*

When problems arise, managers must recognize that they have an obligation to their employees and to the Postal Service to look to themselves, as well as to the employee, to:

- a. Find out who, what, when, where, and why.*
- b. Make absolutely sure you have all the facts.*
- c. The manager has the responsibility to resolve as many problems as possible before they become grievances.*
- d. If the employee's stand has merit, admit it and correct the situation. You are the manager; you must make decisions; don't pass this responsibility on to someone else.*

The National Agreement sets out the basic rules and rights governing management and employees in their dealings with each other, but it is the front-line manager who controls management's attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.

These are rules that were written by management, and they are good guidelines for management to follow. But if it doesn't sound like your workplace, then the union needs your help to make it right. Fill out the Abusive Supervisor Worksheet, and get it to your steward or to the union hall. Together, we can make a difference and make our workplaces better!

RIDING THE RAILS

In the February 2020 Metro Letter Carrier, I told the story of Ray Courtney, a 60-year NALC member who was working as a carrier at the time of the 1970 postal strike. Before Ray started carrying mail, he worked with the Rock Island Railroad, where he was first exposed to the mail and how it is processed.

Until 1977, most passenger trains had Railway Post Offices, or RPOs. The RPOs financially supported the trains, so the passenger fares were just gravy for the railroads. RPOs were like moving post offices. A clerk would ride the train and sort mail as the train travelled.

For example, Ray knew two clerks that would board a train in Iowa City at 3:00 pm, ride to Chicago, then ride back to Iowa City, arriving at 1:00 am. While they were riding the train, the clerks would sort mail. When the train arrived at the destination, that mail would already be sorted into pouches, ready to be handed off to the local postal workers. The train would pick up raw mail for the return journey, and the clerks would sort that mail on the return trip. These were plum jobs held by the most senior clerks, and they worked a lot of overtime.

At that time, Ray worked as a baggage man with the railroad, which meant that he was responsible for passing the mail pouches to the postal supervisors on the trains. The pouches were numbered and would be checked off by a clerk. There was always the same number of pouches, even if that meant that some of the pouches were empty. Some of the pouches had padlocks, and all of the supervisors who handled them carried a revolver in a gun belt.

Ray worked a grueling schedule with the railroad. He would work his own eight-hour shift, then work eight hours more learning the next job he would take. He was not paid for the time spent training. While he enjoyed the work, he does not recommend it to others. Getting paid for training is an important union benefit that we are lucky to have.

The USPS also tried Highway Post Offices, which were regular buses outfitted for postal use. Just like the RPOs, the clerks would ride the busses and sort the mail as the busses travelled. These were discontinued in 1974.

The RPOs were discontinued in 1977, and the resulting drop in income for the railroads meant that most passenger trains also were discontinued. Amtrak was created as a result of those changes. The clerks that had worked in the RPOs came back to the stations and bumped all of the lower seniority clerks off their jobs.

The USPS is constantly changing and updating to meet new challenges and use new technologies. Those of us who are working now will someday tell the new kids about having to use the old scanners and having to drive trucks without air conditioning. The NALC and Branch 132 will work to ensure that those changes make the lives and careers of letter carriers better, so we can all become 60-year NALC members like Ray.

ABUSIVE SUPERVISOR INCIDENT WORKSHEET

Your Name _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____ Duty Station _____

Date of Incident _____ Time of Incident _____

Location of Incident _____

Date Union Notified _____

Victim(s) of Incident _____

Witnesses to Incident _____

Description of Abusive Incident _____

Provoked or Unprovoked _____

EEO Previously Filed? _____ EEO for this Event? _____

NATURE OF ABUSIVE EVENT (Check All That Apply)

1) Overly Demeaning _____ 2) Demeaning _____

3) Sarcastic Remarks _____ 4) Yelling _____

5) Threats of Discipline or Discharge _____ 6) Threats to take Victim off Clock _____

7) Other Specific Threats _____ 8) Profanity _____

9) Physical Threats _____ 10) Physical Gestures _____

11) Physical Contact _____ 12) Other Specifics _____

OTHER COMMENTS

Signature _____ Date _____

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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CALENDAR

Please remember that all events are subject to cancellation due to the coronavirus pandemic or other events. You can check our Facebook page or the website at nalclonestarbranch132.org for the latest information on cancellations.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| October 30 - | Last day to early vote! Get it done before the crowds! |
| November 1 - | Daylight Savings Time ends – Your clocks will go back one hour |
| November 2 - | 7:30 pm - Monthly union meeting |
| November 3 - | Election Day – VOTE! |
| November 5 - | 7:00 pm - Steward training |
| November 9 - | Federal Benefits Open Season begins |
| November 11 - | Postal holiday – Veteran’s Day |
| November 26 - | Postal holiday – Thanksgiving |
| November 28 - | No penalty overtime from November 28 until December 26 |
| November 30 - | Executive Board Meeting (Members may address the board by making an appointment.) |
| December 3 - | 7:00 pm - Steward training |
| December 7 - | 7:30 pm - Monthly union meeting |
| December 14 - | Federal Benefits Open Season ends |
| December 25 - | Postal holiday – Christmas |
| December 26 - | Penalty overtime begins again |
| December 28 - | Executive Board Meeting (Members may address the board by making an appointment.) |
| January 1 - | Postal holiday – New Year’s Day |

